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TWENTY-FIFTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
DIRECTORS  
OF  
JAMES MURRAY'S ROYAL ASYLUM  
FOR  
LUNATICS,  
NEAR  
PERTH.

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JUNE, 1852.

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# LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS, 1852-53.

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## R E P O R T.

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By the elapse of another twelve months, it has become the duty of the Directors to present the Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Institution.

It appears, by the last Annual Report, that there were then in the House one hundred and sixty-nine Patients—ninety-seven Males and seventy-two Females. There have been admitted, during the past year, twenty-eight Patients—ten Males and eighteen Females. Ten Patients have been removed, more or less benefitted—three Males and seven Females. Fifteen have been dismissed cured—six Males and nine Females; and ten have died—seven Males and three Females. There now remain in the Asylum one hundred and sixty-two Patients—ninety-one Males and seventy-one Females. For the principal causes of death, reference is made to the Physician's Report.

It is the pleasing duty of the Directors to report, that, during the past year, nothing has occurred to interfere with the comfortable and efficient management of the Asylum. The different Officers have been assiduously and anxiously engaged in the discharge of the important duties devolving on them; and, as a consequence of this, under the Divine blessing, from the soothing and salutary means employed, it is satisfactory to observe, that, during

the period in question, fifteen patients have been cured and restored to their friends and society, while ten have been removed more or less benefitted.

The time has now passed when it was necessary formally to maintain the advantages which society derives from the establishment of asylums for the insane. These institutions are now all but universally regarded as being quite as essential to the public welfare as hospitals for the sick, or any of the other institutions intended to promote the moral or physical wellbeing of mankind. While this is the case, however, it is not to be supposed that the treatment of insanity is incapable of improvement. The complicated and varied character of the disorder, and the comparatively recent period since the subject has gained the earnest attention of the medical profession, warrant the supposition that important improvements are to be expected, from time to time, as the result of the sober experience of those who make insanity their study. Acting on this conviction, the Directors and Medical Gentlemen in the charge of this Institution, while they would be slow to adopt too rashly untried experiments, are delighted to secure for this Asylum all the advantages which scientific discovery or enlightened experience may have suggested as curative and beneficial. This has been their policy in the past, and it will be so for the future.

When acting on these principles, the Directors are assured that the results of treatment in the Institution will continue, as heretofore, to be cheering and satisfactory. They have the gratification of knowing, that, from time to time, members of the community who, from the dispensations of Providence, have been sent to the Asylum, have, after a short residence, been restored to ordinary health,

and returned to their friends and society ; and who, but for the benefits of such a retreat, would, in many instances, in all probability, have remained during their lifetime the hopeless subjects of their sad malady. But it were a mistake to suppose that it is only the cured who are benefitted by a residence in an Asylum. There are many inmates in this Institution, who, while permitted to retire from the glare and gaze of busy life, and subjected to kind treatment, enjoy comparative exemption from the more distressing manifestations and miseries of their condition, but who, if otherwise treated, would have their malady exasperated, and thereby be exposed to untold miseries. And is this no boon to the insane and to society ? To illustrate what has now been stated, it may be mentioned, that there are not a few patients in the Institution, and who have resided there for many years, who would regard it as a great evil were they obliged to leave it. One man, in particular, identifies his very existence with his residence there. He considers that so long as he remains within its walls he will be free from want, but that were he to go beyond them he would soon be exposed to the misery of absolute starvation ; and this man, while in the Asylum, enjoys comparative exemption from his trouble, renders important services to the Institution, and is often supposed by strangers to be one of the ordinary officers in attendance, rather than a patient. The fact is, though it could be demonstrated that no Asylum had ever been the means of effecting a single cure, the bare alleviation and mitigation, even in a moderate degree, of the misery of the incurably insane, would amply warrant the community in awarding to these Institutions the warmest approval.

As the causes of insanity are various, so it is to be presumed the means of cure must correspond. Both moral and physical appliances are necessary, and the one will frequently be unavailing without the other. Besides, therefore, securing for the patients the best medical superintendence, the Institution continues to employ the services of a Chaplain. A considerable number of the patients avail themselves of the benefits of Divine Service every Sabbath ; and others—and indeed all in any degree capable of it—have the benefit of agreeable intercourse with the Chaplain through the week. It cannot be doubted, that both his public and his private ministrations contribute materially to the comfort and edification of the patients, and form a useful auxiliary in many cases in effecting a restoration to health.

It is impossible too often to impress on the friends of the insane the great advantages to the latter of an early admission into an asylum. The experience of this, and indeed of all asylums, shows this. Dr. Thurnan,\* referring to the Retreat near York, observes—“At the Retreat, the probability of recovery, in cases brought under care within three months of the first attack, has been found to be as four to one, and, excluding cases complicated with serious bodily disorders, as nine to one ; whilst in cases not admitted until more than twelve months after the attack, the probability of recovery is less than as one to four.” If the same thing applies to other asylums in an equal, or nearly an equal, degree (and it can scarcely be questioned that it does), then the quotation just given speaks volumes in favour of an application being made for admission to an asylum as speedily

\* Statistics of Insanity, p. 50.

as possible after the complaint has been unequivocally manifested.

For a variety of statistics and other interesting details connected with the Institution, reference is made to the Report of the Physician, which is appended hereto.

It only remains, in conclusion, that the Directors express their best wishes for the welfare of the Institution, and their expectation, that, through the Divine blessing, it will long continue to extend important advantages to the County of Perth, and to secure the confidence of the community.



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## APPENDIX.

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### ANNUAL REPORT BY DR. MALCOM TO THE DIRECTORS OF JAMES MURRAY'S ROYAL ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.

14TH JUNE, 1852.

SINCE the date of last Annual Report, twenty-eight Patients have been admitted into the Asylum—ten Males and eighteen Females; ten Patients have been removed—three Males and seven Females; fifteen have been dismissed cured—six Males and nine Females; and ten have died—seven Males and three Females. There were in the House at that period one hundred and sixty-nine; there are now one hundred and sixty-two.

It is proper to observe, that the greater number of persons in this Asylum have been in it for many years, and consequently the malady in them is of long standing; also, that incurables, and those who cannot benefit by treatment, are rapidly increasing. This must be the case in all houses of the kind, and will help to account for the small amount of cures, compared with the number returned. If, however, the cures be taken in comparison with the admissions, they will bear a larger proportion.

Perhaps neither alternative is a safe datum, for all those who recovered were not persons who had entered during the year which is just passed. Yet all have been only a limited time here. Few cures take place after a fair trial of treatment of more than two years' duration; and any case to the contrary is rather an exception to be noted, than a result to be expected. For the same reason, persons who are brought here after a lengthened period of their malady, and when every mode of treatment has been tried at home, offer a less chance of cure than those who are sent after the lapse of a few weeks or months, and in whom the disease cannot be said to be confirmed. Accordingly, I would state, that in almost all the cures reported by me at this time, the Patients had not been a year in the Asylum.

Four of the persons cured had previously been treated here, and were re-admitted for relapse, or new attacks of Insanity; and it is to be feared they may again be subject to a recurrence of the disease.

The others are all cures from a first attack, and, in so far as I have heard or seen, the whole are free from their malady, are mixing usefully and well in the world, working at their several trades or managing their families, but all are doing well.

The rules of the Institution are wisely framed, so that as few particulars as possible are given of cures, lest by chance or inadvertence an undesirable publicity might be given to circumstances hurtful to the feelings of the Patients or their friends.

Among the deaths may be mentioned two persons of very advanced age—75 and 83—who were nearly the oldest inhabitants of the place, one of them being among

the first admissions when the Asylum was opened. He long enjoyed uninterrupted health, and was only about a week confined to bed before he died. He died of old age rather than disease, as did also the other person.

One woman died in a fit of epilepsy. She had been unusually well for some time, rose at the usual hour in the morning, and, whilst dressing herself, was seized with a fit. The attendant who was present considered it so much more severe than any former one, that she went for Dr. Pierides, who was quickly on the spot, but on his arrival he found her dead.

Hitherto we have totally escaped all putrid and infectious diseases, nor have the prevailing epidemics visited us. One patient was brought here ill with typhus fever, and she died; but, by complete cleaning and washing, the disease did not spread. When cholera was in Perth we escaped it. This immunity I attribute to the excellent system of drainage about the house, and the absolute cleanliness and proper ventilation at all times enforced and attended to.

We still continue the same kinds and amount of amusements and exercise which we have always used ever since the House was opened; and we have found, from long experience, that, besides tending strongly to effect cures, it relieved the tedium of confinement, and contributes materially to preserve the health of the inmates. Besides amusements, we employ a very considerable number of our Patients in manual labours, chiefly in gardening and supplying the House with water. We also give employment, in their several trades, to those who are handicraftsmen, and they make any repairs or alterations which may be required about the House or grounds.

T A B L E.

|                                                                      |        |               |        | Males. | Fe-<br>males. | Total. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------|--------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Total Number of Patients Admitted from 1827,<br>to June, 1851, ..... |        |               |        | 426    | 408           | 836    |
|                                                                      | Males. | Fe-<br>males. | Total. |        |               |        |
| Cured, .....                                                         | 157    | 200           | 357    |        |               |        |
| Removed Improved, .....                                              | 44     | 44            | 88     |        |               |        |
| Do. Unimproved, ...                                                  | 50     | 38            | 88     |        |               |        |
| Died, .....                                                          | 80     | 54            | 134    |        |               |        |
| Total, .....                                                         | 331    | 336           | 667    | 331    | 336           | 667    |
| Remaining in June, 1851, .....                                       |        |               |        | 97     | 72            | 169    |
| Admitted from June, 1851, to June, 1852, .....                       |        |               |        | 10     | 18            | 28     |
| Total Number of Patients Treated from 1851 to<br>1852, .....         |        |               |        | 107    | 90            | 197    |
|                                                                      | Males. | Fe-<br>males. | Total. |        |               |        |
| Discharged--                                                         |        |               |        |        |               |        |
| Cured, .....                                                         | 6      | 9             | 15     |        |               |        |
| Removed, .....                                                       | 3      | 7             | 10     |        |               |        |
| Died, .....                                                          | 7      | 3             | 10     |        |               |        |
|                                                                      | 16     | 19            | 35     | 16     | 19            | 35     |
| Number of Patients Remaining in June, 1852, ...                      |        |               |        | 91     | 71            | 162    |